DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

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NON – EXISTENT?

By the Editor

A well-known rhyme by Hughes Mearns states:

> As I was going up the stair,
> I met a man who wasn't there!
> He wasn't there again today!
> I wish, I wish he'd stay away!

This cry from the heart might have been made to measure for the West German Government: the harder it ignores the existence of the German Democratic Republic, the more existent it becomes.

Latest act in the thrilling drama "The State That Isn't There" was played out at the beginning of April, when the West German Government threatened unspecified "reprisals" against the United Nations for daring to print, in an official document, a letter from non-existent Foreign Minister Lothar Bolz, of the non-existent GDR.

The background to the uproar was that in December 1961, the General Assembly of the United Nations invited all states which do not possess atomic weapons to state on what conditions they would be ready to renounce them. Replies were received from 45 states, including the GDR, and all the answers were published at the beginning of April in the normal course of business in an official United Nations document.

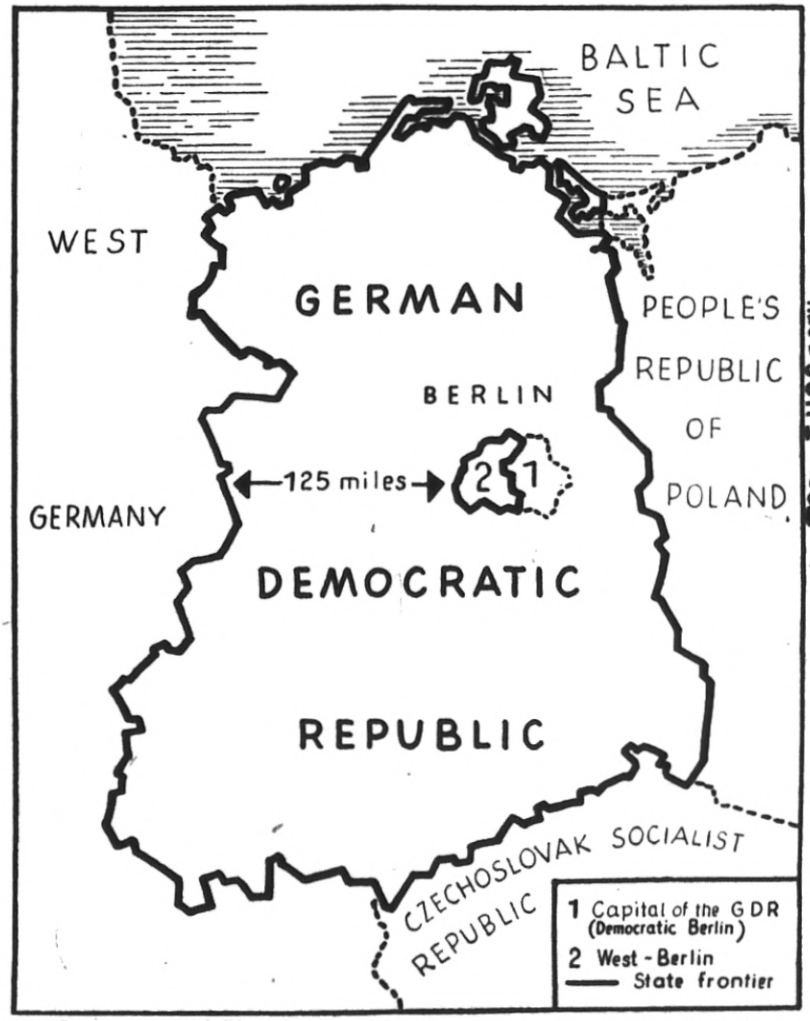
Immediately after this publication, the West German Government filed a formal and very strongly worded protest stating "There is only one country called Germany, and the UN General Secretary is not entitled to print in an official document the point of view of the authorities of a German area." A West German spokesman stated cryptically: "We reserve the right to take further action".

There were two main reasons for Bonn's hysterical response to a normal sounding-out of international attitudes to the problem of nuclear weapons.

Firstly, the West German authorities are increasingly nervous about even the slightest international recognition that the GDR really exists.

Secondly, the reply to the UN query given by the GDR demonstrated very clearly that the GDR is interested in relaxing international tension; the reply stated that the GDR is willing to renounce the possession and stationing of nuclear weapons. West Germany, significantly, did not reply to the UN query, since it is not ready to renounce nuclear warfare. On the contrary, the whole aim of its policy is to get nuclear weapons into its hands.

So once again, the standpoints of the two German states have been made clear for the whole world to see: the German Democratic Republic is willing to go all-out for nuclear disarmament and the neutralisation of both German states; West Germany opposes all such plans.



REC'D JUN 1 - 1962

Once again, the West Berlin problem is a centre of international attention. Our map shows where West Berlin is situated: right in the middle of the German Democratic Republic. All access routes to West Berlin pass through the GDR; any agreement on the use of these access routes must be concluded with the cooperation and approval of the GDR Government.

Through Foreign Eyes

Many western press reports recently have given the impression that the GDR is in a state of chaos. Here are two more balanced reports from responsible western correspondents who have recently paid extended visits to the Republic:

"A strenuous bout of economic stock-taking, most of it far from cheerful, has been going on in East Germany ... Both Governments (GDR and West Germany, ed.) have reason to apply the damper to personal incomes. In East Germany the reasons are more urgent, and it looks as if the damper is being more energetically applied; but there is a considerable way to go before production and incomes are brought into line. This does not mean that the population is suffering grave material hardship. The economic reports and speeches read like plain speaking, not like attempts to cover up a crisis ...

"Much emphasis is being put on rationalisation, technical improvement, high utilisation of plant and the adaptation of working methods and work standards to new equipment ... The working week is plainly going to be kept at 45 hours for some time yet; earlier talk of leading the world in shortening hours has proved unreal and has been stopped. But it is to technology that the regime is mainly looking for salvation; and its output of machine tools and industrial plant is impressive enough, both in quality and quantity, to make it likely that rationalisation and re-equipment will in the end have their effect.

"The rewards, if the production drive succeeds, are offered not in higher money wages all round but in more regular supplies of goods and services in greater variety and better quality. There is need for improvement. Just now, potatoes are the most obvious shortage. House coal was the last, butter supplies have been uneven. But it is necessary to keep these things in proportion. Rice and macaroni to take the place of potatoes seem to be abundant. It is true that Germans like potatoes, and that macaroni cooked by a Mecklenburg peasant is not the most appetising of dishes, but this is an inconvenience, not a hardship.

"Butter is not now on the open shelves in the self-service stores, but it usually seems to be on hand (at the bakery counter) for regular customers. Butter consumption (13.6 kilogrammes a head a year) and meat consumption are high. Margarine and other fats are plentiful. Heating generally seems to be more than adequate. The men are well shod, the women well nyloned. The waiting period for a motor car is long, three years or more, but other durable consumer goods — television sets, refrigerators, furniture — are in better supply than they were. Housing has immensely improved. When there are shortages, people are most aware of what they lack. But a visitor returning to East Germany after four years' absence is struck by the improvement in a wide range of material things. Doubtless the East German shopper is harder to impress."

("The Economist", London, March 31st)

* * *

"A neutral observer has the task of drawing the balance of a state with over 15 million inhabitants, a state the very existence of which the countries of the west stubbornly refuse to recognise. If one takes into consideration the dreadful condition in which East Germany had to take over the economy in the post-war period, an economy caught in an apparently inescapable vicious spiral, then one can only be astonished at the results.

"In 1945 East Germany found itself thrown back into the condition of a peasant state, since all its industries had been partitioned up. Its speedy conversion into a modern, strong industrialised state demanded great sacrifices. But between 1950 and 1960 the production of soft coal has grown from 137 to 225 million tons; the production of pig iron from 202,000 tons to two million tons; the production of steel from one million tons to 3.3 million tons. In the same period electric power production has grown from 19.5 to 40.3 thousand million kilowatt hours. Despite the lack of rolled steel, which had to be imported with great difficulty from West Germany, the machine park has grown from 38,600 tons to about 110,000 tons.

"Despite all difficulties the chemical industry has been expanded as a priority project, and by 1961 it had an output four-and-a-half times as high as in 1936.

"When Germany was suddenly partitioned in 1949, West Germany had a heavy industry supported by the output of 120 blast furnaces; East Germany had only five furnaces in bad repair.

"East Germany has been converted into an industrial building site of impressive size. I visited the 'Black Pump' Combine not far from the model town of Hoyerswerda, built for 20,000 workers and their families. This is the biggest combine in the world, with a total built-up area of seven square kilometres; by 1965 it will be handling 100,000 tons of soft coal daily.

"In Eisenhuettenstadt, the former Stalinstadt, 'the first socialist city of the German Democratic Republic', about 20 kilometres from the Polish frontier, I saw another model town, and another huge combine ...

"Finally I saw Rostock, a harbour which practically did not exist fifteen years ago, and which today has 20 kilometres of wharves on the Baltic. The merchant marine of the GDR, which amounted to 140,000 tons in 1958, is due to reach a tonnage of 480,000 by 1965.

"And to all this must be added the social advantages given to the workers, the students, the doctors, researchers and teachers (in short the new privileged classes) ...

"I saw young men and women who sang as they walked in the streets. They did not look as though they anticipated a war. They probably thought that their cities were being built for the next decade, for a really socialist and humane world..."

("France Observateur", Paris, April 5th 1962)

Radio Berlin International

Schedule of daily broadcasts in English

Europe:

18:00–18:30, 20:00–20:30, 22:00–22:30, 23:00–23:30 GMT
(49.06, 41.10 and 30.83 m = 6115, 7300 and 9730 kcs.)

North America:

0:30–1:00 and 2:00–2:30 GMT
(31.38 m = 9560 kcs.)

Africa:

16:15–17:00 GMT
(24.98 m = 12008 kcs.)

Near and Middle East:

16:00–16:30 and 23:00–23:30 GMT
(25.49 m = 11765 kcs.)

MURDERERS AT LARGE

By Frederick Ford

Two old cases of political murder in Germany suddenly came back into the news at the beginning of April: the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in 1919, and the murder of Ernst Thaelmann in 1944. Here are the details:

1. The Murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg

Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were pioneers in the left-wing of German Social Democracy before World War One; as leaders of the Spartakus League they led the fight, from inside and outside prison, to end the war and get rid of the Kaiser. In November 1918, when the German soldiers, sailors and workers finally did revolt, overthrow Kaiser Wilhelm and stop the slaughter at the battlefronts, Liebknecht and Luxemburg took the lead in the movement to oust the militarists and establish a socialist Germany. On January 1st 1919 they were co-founders of the German Communist Party. On January 15th 1919 they were arrested in Berlin by officers of a "Free Corps" formation, a pre-nazi fascist body, and brutally murdered. The officer who gave the order for their arrest and "execution", a Major Waldemar Pabst, later played a prominent part in various right-wing putsches and murders, and later fled to Austria, where he organised a fascist militia. He is now an arms dealer in West Germany, and has recently begun to write articles boasting about the murder. Writing in the West German magazine "Der Stern" in 1960 he stated: "I gained the impression that Liebknecht and Luxemburg were the brains of the revolution, and decided to have them liquidated. On my orders, the two were seized." Major Pabst continued his reminiscences in an article in the right-wing West German student magazine "Deutsche Studentenanzeiger" on January 15th 1962 in which he stated: "Consciously weighing the circumstances, I took the decision to depart from the path of legality... The execution, carried out by my subordinates, took a considerably different form from that which I had ordered. It therefore raised more dust than was really necessary."

This article might perhaps have been disregarded as the boastings of a retired thug, who today plays no part in public affairs; but the official West German Government organ, the "Bulletin", reprinted Major Pabst's article on February 8th, adding an editorial note stating: "Pabst was a well known leader of the Free Corps, which successfully prevented the bolshevising of Germany. In cooperation with Government troops, and often after bloody conflicts, the Free Corps dealt with this first communist aggression."

This official accolade for political assassination is, in the opinion of legal circles in Berlin, a clear offence against Article 140 of the German Penal Code, which forbids "acts glorifying murder". Acting on legal advice, Karl Liebknecht's widow, Sophie Liebknecht, who lives today in Berlin, has filed charges with the Bonn Prosecutor's Office against State Secretary Felix von Eckardt, former nazi propagandist who is now head of the Information Office of the West German Government, and therefore responsible for the publication of the "Bulletin".

2. The Murder of Ernst Thaelmann

Ernst Thaelmann, Hamburg docker, was General Secretary of the German Communist Party in the years immediately before Hitler came to power, and won 5 million votes in the Presidential election of 1932, running against Hindenburg and Hitler. Immediately after the nazi take-over he was arrested, and was held without trial by the Gestapo until August 18th 1944 when he was murdered in Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

The murder was committed in the deepest secrecy, and the nazis claimed he was killed in an air-raid, but German political prisoners in Buchenwald managed to identify two of the SS guards who committed the murder: SS Staff Sergeant Wolfgang Otto, and SS Corporal Alfred Berger. These men disappeared after the war, but members of the West German Association of Nazi Persecutees have finally managed to track them down. Otto is today a teacher in Geldern, West Germany, and Berger is a bank clerk in Rottweil, West Germany. Charges of murder against the two men were filed during the first week of April, but the West German courts had taken no action to arrest them by the time this issue of GERMAN REPORT went to press.

TOP PROSECUTOR — OLD NAZI

An old member of the Nazi Party was appointed West German Procurator General on March 30th. This post is equivalent to that of Attorney General in Britain.

The new top lawyer of the West German state is Wolfgang Fraenkel, who joined the Nazi Party on May 1st 1933, and held membership book No. 2,732,006. When he was promoted in 1936 to a leading post in the nazi legal system, the nazi Gauleiter of the district of Kurhessen reported on September 17th 1936: "Fraenkel's political reliability is beyond all question. I have no objection to his promotion."

As Procurator General of West Germany, Herr Fraenkel will be responsible for the court proceedings for the banning of the VVN, the Association of Nazi Persecutees, which is now pending. The actual court prosecution will be in the hands of Dr Reuss, another old nazi lawyer. During the nazi period Dr Reuss published numerous articles in the legal weekly "Juristischen Wochenschrift". In issue No 12 1936 Dr Reuss wrote: "The Fuehrer has quite rightly declared 'National Socialist Germany wants peace out of deep philosophical conviction'. These words from the Fuehrer must remove any doubt about Germany's desire for peace."

(N. B. Procurator General in the GDR is Josef Streit, imprisoned by the nazis from 1939 to 1945 in the concentration camps of Dachau and Mauthausen.)

Anti-Nazi Meet "Verboten"

Anti-fascist resistance fighters from France were prevented from attending a meeting with German anti-Nazis in the West German city of Essen on April 14th. The Chief of Police in Essen banned the get-together three hours before the scheduled arrival of the group from Ivry, France.

The Germans were members of the Association of Persecutees of Nazism, which the West German Government is trying to ban.

OXFORD STUDENTS GET WEST BERLIN'S GOAT

West Berlin propagandists love to invite foreign observers to the city, where they attempt to give them a one-sided view of the West Berlin problem. They go purple in the face with indignation if their foreign visitors also go to East Berlin in order to get the other side of the story. Below we reproduce extracts from an article in the West Berlin daily "Telegraf" of April 15th 1962:

OXFORD STUDENTS DANCE TO TUNE OF SOCIALIST UNITY PARTY

Berlin has played host to many guests in its free part since the building of the wall of shame. Most of them came in order to show their friendship to the divided city. But there are others, too, and this was proved recently by students of Oxford University who recently paid a visit to the Spree metropolis on their own initiative and with the support of the Bonn Foreign Ministry.

Some of them admitted openly that they had come with prejudices against all things German. Perhaps this is the explanation why, despite the good programme drawn up for them by the West Berlin Information Centre, they nearly all preferred to spend their days in the East Sector.

They were invited to a discussion by students of the (West Berlin) Technical University, but scarcely half a dozen of the 27 English guests attended. When John Peet, however, Pankow's chief propagandist for the English-speaking world, invited them to an official talk, then nearly all of them went. The students showed similar eagerness in a discussion with the Soviet magazine 'Neue Zeit'.

During their visits to the East Sector they made busy contact with the Communist Free German Youth and the zonal trade union federation FDGB. And for contacts of this sort our Foreign Ministry contributed £120. The result was that some of the Oxford students made rude remarks when they discovered that they were expected to pay for their lunches and dinners themselves. One of the mildest remarks was that this was typical German lack of hospitality.

The views of some of these students on West Berlin and the Federal Republic went like this: "Here in the West the Nazis rule; a front-line atmosphere is artificially being created in West Berlin; visits paid by Federal President Luebke help create this atmosphere."

(GERMAN REPORT comments: "Telegraf" has, as usual, got its facts wrong. The Oxford students asked to see John Peet and not vice versa; only twelve of them came, saying "We are mostly staunch Conservatives", and the discussion was hot. They did not have any discussions with a "Soviet magazine", but with staff members of the GDR daily "Neue Zeit", organ of the GDR's Christian Democratic Union.)

Young Unionists Say "No"

Representatives of more than 700,000 West German trade union youth rejected all attempts by top trade union brass to tone down their opposition to A-bombs, territorial demands and the planned dictatorial "emergency laws" at their April conference.

The 190 delegates, meeting in West Berlin on April 13th and 14th, concluded a lively nine-hour debate by voting to send a worn-out Prussian jack boot to Dr Hans Krueger, MP and Chairman of the "Association of Refugee Groups", the West German organisations which call for the conquest of Polish, Czechoslovak and Soviet territory. "We are sending you this army boot as an admonition and warning. It is for us a symbol of undemocratic, totalitarian opinion," the young unionists stated.

In long speeches leaders of West Germany's German Trade Union Federation advised the delegates, who are affiliated to the Federation, that they should approve the West German army, West German rearmament and the coming emergency laws, even if they did not like the generals. They were advised to leave politics alone and pay attention only to questions of apprenticeship and factory conditions.

In the debate, one delegate answered trade union chief Richter by saying: "Willi Richter isn't being honest. Why doesn't he say openly why he wants to keep us from participating in the Easter anti-bomb marches? The whole world is demanding disarmament. We young trade unionists cannot approve NATO."

Escape From W. German Police

After a sensational escape from political police in the centre of Munich on April 4th, Jupp Angenfort, 38, former West German youth leader and provincial MP, managed to elude a nation-wide dragnet search and reach safety in the German Democratic Republic on April 15th.

Angenfort, once a leader of the outlawed Free German Youth organisation in West Germany, was being led from the Munich courthouse to a nearby police wagon when he broke out of his handcuffs and ducked into the passing crowds. All police efforts to find him or prevent him from reaching the border were in vain.

At a press conference in Berlin on April 18th, Angenforth gave an account of his escape. "I cannot go into many details, because this would endanger the many dozens of people who helped me" he said. "But I can say this: I would not be here today if it had not been for the willing help of many people from all sections of the population. I was hidden for one night by a Catholic priest, and dozens of other people, Social Democrats, Communists and non-party people all gave a hand. I am particularly glad to report that many of the ones who helped were young people who have joined the West German Communist Party since it was banned in 1956."

Jupp Angenfort was originally arrested on March 10th 1953 despite his parliamentary immunity as a Communist member of the provincial parliament in North Rhine-Westfalia. He was accused of calling for strike action against West German remilitarisation and sentenced to 5 years at hard labour.

Sentencing him, the judge stated: "Angenfort's call for political mass strikes is high treason, since each and every strike is an act of force, and must therefore be regarded as high treason under paragraph 81 of the criminal code. To call for the overthrow of the Adenauer Government is illegal. The fact that the accused called in this court for the formation of a united, peace-loving and democratic Germany must be taken into consideration, since this in itself proves his high treason."

Angenfort was paroled after serving the majority of his sentence, but he continued to work for peace and was re-imprisoned last month to serve out the remainder of his sentence. His escape took place after the re-sentencing but before he could be transferred to prison.

A Printer Visits Printers

By Doug Hall

A young Australian compositor who visited East Berlin early this year while staying at a youth hostel in West Berlin has sent us his impressions of the informal visit he paid to the printers where GERMAN REPORT is printed, a visit which we arranged for him.

Language was the main problem! Nevertheless, with a few words of English and a very few of German, understanding became possible if very difficult.

The old goods lift had brought me to the fifth floor, where I first met Mr. Krieger, who was in charge of the composing department. He took me through to the linotypes where I met Mr. Steffan, the foreman in this section.

I glanced out of the window. On the other side of Berlin's wall was West Berlin, aglow with all its lights. Yet I was in a printing office in East Berlin, situated in a border area that was still awaiting reconstruction. The building was large but certainly no showpiece. This was not East Berlin's biggest newspaper, not a place reserved for foreign visitors, but an ordinary printing office, the place where GERMAN REPORT is published.

In the linotype department there were seven machines. My visit took place during the afternoon shift and there were five operators working. None of the machines were new, yet the five machines being used had been well-maintained and were in good running order. One of the other two machines was not much good and was difficult to operate, I was told.

The operators were naturally interested in how conditions and wages compared with Australia. The wages took a bit of figuring out: Australian money into British currency and then into marks. The average wage was 200 marks a week (£18 English or £22/10/—Australian), very similar to the average Australian wage for this class of work. Australia was well ahead in terms of hours, however. Whereas in Australia day workers have a 40-hour week, and night workers only 37½ hours, in East Germany there is a 45-hour week with five days at eight hours plus five hours on Saturday (the 45-hour week is also the rule in West Germany).

Holidays in the German Democratic Republic were better than in Australia. The annual summer holiday for linotype operators was 18 days with 12 other holidays while in Australia it is two weeks with 10 public holidays. Two of the young operators told me they were going to Bulgaria this summer for their holidays.

Unfortunately there was urgent work to be performed and not too much time could be spent talking. So I wandered around and watched while the others worked. Mr Steffan was a very able operator and had won awards for his ability, I was told.

This national-owned printing firm has a total of about 200 employees and prints about 25 publications, two of which are in English, several in Russian and the rest in German. Consequently some operators have a little knowledge of both English and Russian. They set my name in Russian and presented me with the linotype slug as a souvenir.

Later in the evening a couple of the operators brought back six small bottles of beer. This was a nice gesture and we had a drink together.

While my operator friends continued with their work I strolled into the large composing room, which was filled with many cases of type. The proofing presses were reasonably modern as was also the saw. The room was well laid out and the lighting was good but the shop was lacking in some modern equipment. It was very comfortably warm despite the snow on the ground outside.

The whole attitude was friendly here and I was permitted to go where I pleased. I felt a little guilty, in fact, for I certainly held up production somewhat in the linotype department. The workers went about their jobs without much apparent supervision. In fact on this shift at any rate the supervisors were also working away with the other men.

After spending about 2½ hours there, I descended again to the snow-covered ground and returned in the elevated railroad to where I was staying in West Berlin.

Freighter No. 40

The "Trattendorf", an 11,200 ton freighter, was launched at the GDR's Warnow Shipyards on April 14th. It was the 40th ship to slide down into the Warnow River since the big shipyards near Rostock, built completely from scratch since the war, were put into operation in early 1956.

Other ships constructed here include fifteen in the 10,000 class, three predecessors of the "Trattendorf" in the 11,200 class, and a series of iron ore freighters built for export to the Soviet Union.

The Warnow Shipyards are mainly responsible for bringing the GDR's merchant marine from nil after the war to its present total of 65 ships with a tonnage of 317,000 tons.

Win a New Reader

Fill in the name and address of a friend, work-mate or acquaintance on the form below, and send it to

Democratic German Report
Friedrichstrasse 167/III
Berlin W 8, Germany

We shall be pleased to mail sample copies of the paper to him or her.

Name .....

Address .....

Sale for Sables

The 510th International Fur Auction of Leipzig, traditional fur trading city for many centuries, closed on April 11th after buyers from Britain, the U.S.A., West Germany and other countries bought fur goods offered by the GDR, the Soviet Union, Mongolia, Poland and other socialist countries as well as Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Both buyers and sellers expressed satisfaction with the auction; main interest was in mink, blue fox, Persian lamb, muskrat and marten.

Dysentery Fought

East Berlin was hit by a serious epidemic of dysentery in April, which kept doctors, nurses and hospital staffs working hard night and day. By the middle of the month, the spread of the disease in East Berlin seemed to have been largely checked, and all efforts were being made to keep it from spreading to other parts of the country. Teams of medical students on a voluntary basis visited all families in the city to ask about any unreported cases of the disease and to give elementary medical advice.

Newspapers, radio and TV stressed scrupulous cleanliness as the main method of stopping the disease, and workers, schoolchildren and other East Berliners were dipping their hands into disinfectant solutions on every possible occasion.

Expanded hospital service made it possible to keep the death toll down to four people, though a total of about 40,000 cases, mainly light, were recorded.

The efforts of the health authorities were not aided by constant radio and TV reports from West Berlin stations which wildly exaggerated the spread of the disease.

De Sica in E. Berlin

Vittorio De Sica, well-known Italian actor and film director, visited East Berlin in early April to attend several performances at the famous theatre of the "Berliner Ensemble". After seeing Bertolt Brecht's "Threepenny Opera" and "The Preventable Rise of Arturo Ui" as well as a film version of the late dramatist's "Mother Courage" he had a friendly meeting with the theatre's actors and with Helene Weigel, Brecht's widow, who is director of the theatre.

He was accompanied on his visit by Carlo Ponti, film producer and husband of actress Sophia Loren.

Illegal CP Growing

The West German Communist Party, though illegal since 1956, is growing in strength according to one of its leading enemies, Interior Minister Josef-Hermann Dufhues of the West German province of North Rhine-Westfalia. According to Dufhues, who is one of the top men in Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union, the Communist Party has become much more active this year and may well achieve its announced goal of 3000 new members, despite the "verboten" ruling and innumerable trials and convictions based on membership in the party. Eleven new communist-edited factory newspapers have been started up in his province alone, Dufhues stated.

LOOKING BACKWARDS

1922

April 27th: All political parties in the Rhineland, with the exception of the Communists, declare their opposition to a neutralisation of the Rhineland.

(One of the top Rhineland politicians in 1922 was Konrad Adenauer, Lord Mayor of Cologne. Forty years later Chancellor Adenauer and all West Germany's parliamentary parties opposed the neutralisation of the whole of Germany; once again the Communists were in the opposition.)

June 24th: Walther Rathenau, German Foreign Minister, is murdered by "premature nazis" who accused him of treason because he favoured co-existence with the Soviet Union. Following the murder the German Trade Union Federation urges a purge of reactionaries and anti-Republicans holding key posts in the civil service, the courts, and command posts in the army. No action is taken.

1932

May 6th: Crown Prince Wilhelm, son of the Kaiser, a Hitler supporter, gives an interview to Associated Press stating: "Only the ending of all limitations on German sovereignty can give our hard-working people the strength to participate once again in shaping the lives of the nations: this will ensure peace in Europe."

May 17th: The revanchist organisation "Association of Germans Abroad" holds a great East Prussia rally. Speakers call on the German people to "remain true to the Germanic East". "East Prussia is the main bastion of Germandom: Memel belongs to Germany" states another speaker.

(Similar revanchist rallies, with identical speeches, are a feature of West Germany in 1962.)

June 1st: Franz von Papen, later nazi diplomat, is appointed Chancellor. He ends a temporary ban on Hitler's Storm Troops, and dissolves parliament on June 4th. The Communist newspaper "Die Rote Fahne" comments: "The order of the day must be the establishment of a broad anti-fascist united front."

(Franz von Papen has just been awarded full pension rights by a West German court.)

1942

April 29th: Ribbentrop states: "When Russia's sources of oil are exhausted she will be brought to her knees. Then the British will bow in order to save what remains of the mauled Empire. America is a big bluff."

(Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, London 1948)

May 28th: The British Labour Party annual conference passes a resolution calling for "close post-war collaboration with the United States, Russia and China . . . the purging of Germany of all forces making for war."

May 29th: Gestapo chief Heydrich executed in Prague by the Czech resistance. As a reprisal the Gestapo executes 199 men and boys of the village of Lidice, and deports all women and children.

1952

May 5th: "Deutschland über alles", old German anthem which Hitler's armies sang across Europe, is officially proclaimed West Germany's National Anthem.

May 11th: West German police, firing into a young people's demonstration for peace in Essen, kill Philipp Mueller, 21, and wound two others.

Conductress Goes on "A Cure"

By Allen Mann

Frau Frida Preuss, a widow of 56, has been working regularly as a conductor on East Berlin's trams for six years now.

A few months ago her union representative came to her in the tram terminal after work and said, "How would you like to go to the Baltic seashore for a cure?"

"But I'm not ill," she answered.

"Oh, that doesn't matter, this is what they call a preventive cure, and our terminal gets a certain number of places we can fill every year; we usually try to send some of the older workers there, if they want to go, that is. What do you say, Frida? Let me know tomorrow?"

Frau Preuss told me that she was very sceptical about going to the seashore in winter, and could hardly imagine what a "preventive cure" would be like. She was also worried about getting along with a bunch of strangers for three full weeks.

"But my daughter talked me into it," she told me. "'You'll like it well enough once you're there', she said. And then, after all, all expenses of the cure from the train trip to food and lodging were covered by our health insurance system, and in addition I would receive 50% of my pay as regular 'sick pay', another 20% of my pay as a pocket money allowance, and also a 30 mark present from the union to help cover any expenses. Best of all, I would not lose any of my regular annual leave of 23 days. So it was really rather hard to say no, although I was still quite sceptical.

"After a medical examination to see whether I was fit enough to go for the cure (as she told me with a slight twinkle), I left on the train in mid-February. There was a special compartment reserved for us, but since we were all strangers, we just sat looking rather glumly at each other. Then they announced over the train's loudspeaker system that there was a cinema car on the train. Another woman and I decided to go; we saw "Two Hearts in the Snow" which was just about right for a winter vacation, and that improved our mood. It also turned out that the other woman and I were both confirmed cigarette smokers, and so we moved to a smoker compartment and soon hit it off very well.

"When we arrived at our destination of Heringsdorf, on the island of Usedom near the Polish border, we were brought to a very fancy-looking resort home. I was able to get a 2-bed room with my new friend from the train, and so I was sure to have no arguments about smoking for the next three weeks. We were very happy when we found that our room was roomy and pleasant, with a fine view of the Baltic, and what was almost as important, central heating and hot water. My worst fears were dispelled.

At mealtime we found ourselves at a table for nine, together with a concert soprano, two electrical workers, two factory department heads and three office-workers, including my friend, a bookkeeper for the Berlin Electrical Company.

"All in all, there were 200 of us, the women in one building and the men in another one nearby. The meals were really excellent, with stress on salads and raw vegetables."

It turned out that none of the 200 guests were ill; some were there on post-convalescence leaves, others were run down and needed a rest, and some, like Frau Preuss, were perfectly healthy. Nevertheless there were rules: an hour's rest after lunch and a 10:00 p.m. curfew, when everyone had to be in bed. For those who wanted it, there was group calisthenics three mornings a week, accompanied by a guitar player, and everyone was encouraged to get as much of the clean, cool sea air as possible.

Frau Preuss was especially enthusiastic about this latter feature; she went walking along the empty winter beach at all times of the day, even when it was icy or snow-covered, and, as an inland city-dweller, she loved to watch the far-off lighthouse with its rotating search-light or to observe the many ships sailing into the Polish seaports not far distant.

There were also pleasant strolls in the other direction, through the beech and pine woods to the island's lakes or to its other shore, with occasional unauthorised stops for coffee and cake in one of the little thatched-roof villages.

But the cure management also arranged other, more organised entertainment. Almost every afternoon and evening something was offered. Children from a nearby kindergarten greeted the guests with a little programme of songs and dances soon after their arrival. There was music for dancing most afternoons, and there were illustrated lectures on proper use of cosmetics, how to make tasty vegetarian dishes and how to make batik decorations, as well as lantern-slide travelogues on the Baltic Sea area. One evening there was a lecture on jazz and modern music with tape recordings.

There were also a few big parties. At the first one – to break the ice – the guests from different parts of the country had to sing one local song, and then amateur talent and "mix-'em-up" dances filled the evening.

There was also a special celebration of International Womens' Day on March 8th, a custom in all parts of the country, and the women were served coffee and cake by the men guests and given small handmade souvenirs by the management. (The cure management, by the way, is hired by the health insurance organisation, which is run by the trade unions.)

The high-point for the guests was the celebration of the "Fasching" carnival (or "Mardi Gras"). Costumes were required, and since no-one had thought to bring any with them, it was necessary to improvise. The management begged them only to refrain from using curtains or bedding. "Such improvised parties are usually the most fun anyway", Frau Preuss told me, and she was still very enthusiastic about that evening, where nothing stronger than wine was served, but where everyone enjoyed themselves immensely.

When the three weeks were at an end the cure guests, rested and relaxed, returned to their jobs in Thuringia, Saxony, Mecklenburg or Berlin. Frau Preuss traveled home with other Berliners in a reserved compartment, but with wine and good spirits, the trip home was much jollier than the trip to the seashore. "Young and old, we sang all the way to the final railway station in Berlin," she admitted.

Back at work collecting fares and making change from her little perch in the front of East Berlin's No. 72 and 74 tram cars, Frau Preuss laughs at the idea that she hesitated about going to Heringsdorf. "If the chance ever comes again, I'll say yes first and ask questions afterwards."

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Once again, we boggle. Repeatedly we have recorded in these columns what seems to be the ultimate in re-nazification; but the bureaucrats of Bonn always think up a new extreme.

The latest breath-taking step towards the full rehabilitation of anybody and everybody who did well out of the nazi period is the project to pay compensation to "Aryanisers" who lost their ill-gotten gains in 1945.

Complicated

This may sound a little complicated, so let me explain. After Hitler came to power, and particularly after the nazi anti-Semitic campaign got into full swing in 1938, Jewish property ranging from little one-man shops to big factories was confiscated outright or forcibly sold. This property was then farmed out to nazi big-wigs and hangers-on at ludicrously low prices; many fortunes in nazi Germany were founded on Jewish property acquired at throw-away rates.

After 1945 the Jews, if they had survived, got their property back; and this of course left a lot of nazis feeling sore. Now the Adenauer Government is preparing a special act to compensate these poor disgruntled nazis for their losses. The law, which will be presented to the West German Parliament at its next session, is entitled "Law on Compensation for Losses due to Reparations, Restitution, Destruction and Return".

It is a complicated law, but when you cut your way through the legal wording, it states that the Bonn state will pay compensation of up to one hundred percent to persons who, after the Second World War, had to relinquish property which in the opinion of the Allied Occupying Powers had come into their hands illegally.

"Legally Acquired"

In order to claim the compensation, the claimants will only have to show that they had acquired the property "legally". Since the nazis even carried though their Aryanisation campaign with a great show of legality — Jews forced into emigration or rounded up for the gas-chambers had to sign over all their property in full legal form — this clause should present no difficulty to the nazi profiteers. And there is plenty of money in it; the West German Ministry of Finance has earmarked two thousand million marks for the pay-off. Even legendary gangsters like Al Capone never thought of a pay-off on this scale.

Just while we are on the subject of hand-outs for nazis: I have been looking up the sums that the West German state has been paying out other "victims of denazification". These poor victims are the people known in West Germany as the "131ers", nazis who were purged from the civil service, the police and the courts in 1945. Most are today back at work in their old jobs, but quite a number have not, for one reason or another, been re-instated. These people get their cryptic name from Paragraph 131 of the West German Constitution, which states that special arrangements shall be made to pay them compensation for their interrupted careers. So far, this compensation has amounted to the astronomical sum of 12 thousand million marks — well over £1000 million. And the whole of this sum has gone to nazi judges, Gestapo men, and so on.

But of course the West German Republic is the very model of a nice, reformed democratic state.

Support

When I went into the East Berlin Press Club a few days ago, a colleague with a long memory said: "I see you are getting official support at long last for that old campaign of yours". I must have looked a bit blank, because he added: "You know, about shaking hands".

Then it all came back to me. In 1951 I wrote a short and I hope humorous article for an East German magazine about several marginal aspects of the German scene as they hit a foreigner living here. One subject was the German feather bed, a monstrous sack of feathers which many Germans sleep under, and which it is very difficult to master unless you have been born to it: the other subject was shaking hands.

Far be it for me to criticise the harmless cultural traditions of another nation, but all foreign visitors to Germany are struck by the fact that hands are shaken all the time, and all day long; I have a suspicion, which I have never been able to confirm, that when a married couple here wake up in the morning they solemnly turn to each other and pump each others hands.

Rash

But anyhow, to get back to my old article on the subject: I rather rashly clothed my observations on the subject in the form of a mock proposal that if hand-shaking were cut down a bit, the Five Year Plan would be completed more quickly, and adorned it with some mock statistics on the total man hours lost every year in the exchange of cordial greetings.

This extraordinarily unimportant article would have been forgotten almost as soon as it was written, if a West Berlin newspaper had not noticed it and taken it deadly seriously. "New Communist Campaign against Personal Freedom" was, if I remember rightly, the headline on this western counter-blast. "Hand-shaking is now to be banned in East Germany as part of a new inhuman speed-up" the newspaper stated. This report was in its turn picked up by dozens of West German papers, which drew all sorts of weighty political lessons from my original harmless comments.

And this was what my colleague in the Press Club was now referring to. But what did he mean by "official support for my campaign"? Simply that as part of the precautions against the spreading of the recent nasty epidemic of dysentery, newspapers here have recently been campaigning against the unnecessary shaking of hands.

Reflex Action

I have to report that although in other ways the anti-epidemic precautions have been very efficient, in this one sector there has been very little success. As far as my observations go, hands get shaken as vigorously as ever; it seems to be a reflex action, and nothing can be done about it.

P. S. To prevent any possibility of a misunderstanding this time, I had better make it completely clear that I have nothing against the custom, and all appeals to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations because of my attack on basic human liberties would be out of place.

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